

**City of Minneapolis  
Federal Priorities for the  
107<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session**

This memorandum outlines areas of Federal government in which the City of Minneapolis has a particular interest or local concern. The Office of Intergovernmental Relations within the City of Minneapolis welcomes any questions on these or other issues pending before Congress.

*Sincerely,*

Mayor R.T. Rybak	Council President Paul Ostrow
Council Member Paul Zerby	Council Member Joe Biernat
Council Member Barbara Johnson	Council Member Natalie Johnson Lee
Council Member Dean Zimmermann	Council Member Lisa Goodman
Council Member Robert Lilligren	Council Member Gary Schiff
Council Member Dan Niziolek	Council Member S. Scott Benson
Council Member Sandy Colvin Roy	Council Member Barret Lane

Andrea Hart Kajer, Director of Government Relations, City of Minneapolis

Dennis McGrann, Director of Public Affairs, Lockridge Grindal Nauen P.L.L.P.

Andrew Tantillo, Senior Federal Relations Specialist, Lockridge Grindal Nauen P.L.L.P.

## COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Brownfields Redevelopment

The City of Minneapolis thanks Congress for supporting the Brownfields redevelopment bill last year. The City is committed to cleaning up and safeguarding our environment. In an urban setting such as Minneapolis this commitment is not just common sense – it is good business. **The City therefore respectfully requests assistance in securing funding for Brownfields redevelopment in FY 2003.**

### Empowerment Zones

Minneapolis was designated a Round II Empowerment Zone (EZ) in 1998. The Minneapolis EZ has used the program's tax benefits and grant money to spur economic development where it is most needed. The Minneapolis EZ serves close to 50,000 residents and, in 2001, leveraged \$12 million in private investment in the EZ. The uncertain nature of the annual appropriations process makes this public-private partnership difficult to maintain. The City echoes the Appropriations Committee in calling for a long-term solution that includes mandatory spending for Round II Empowerment Zones. **The City respectfully asks for assistance in securing \$3 million per Zone for FY 2003.**

### Homeland Security Block Grant and Community Development Block Grant

The City strongly supports the Administration's call for an increase in homeland security spending. The City has incurred significant costs -- from police/fire personnel overtime to mutual aid agreements -- in safety prevention measures for the City of Minneapolis and its surrounding communities. Although it is helpful for emergency preparedness, the City is concerned that the proposed "Homeland Defense Block Grant" will come at the expense of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), an essential economic and community building tool for the City. **The City therefore urges level funding for the CDBG, and asks Congress to meet the increased need to support homeland security in our cities without decreasing funding opportunities under the CDBG.**

## HOUSING

### Affordable Housing

Working families in the metro area continue to experience an unacceptably low level of affordable housing. In fact, forty percent of Minneapolis' homeless population works full time. This problem slows economic development and stretches families thin by limiting disposable income. To combat increasing housing costs and the consequent displacement of workers and disabled citizens into substandard housing or homeless, the City has made affordable housing its top priority. The City is working with a number of municipalities, including St. Paul, to address this important issue both locally and regionally.

Minneapolis and its surrounding communities are in the midst of an affordable housing crisis, yet the Administration's proposed budget fails to significantly increase effective affordable housing tools. **Therefore the City urges Congress to work with the Administration to increase support for the HOME Investment Partnership program to expand affordable housing, HOPE VI to revitalize severely distressed public housing, Housing for People With Aids (HOPWA), Public Housing Drug Elimination Grants, and Homelessness Assistance and Rental Assistance programs.**

## JUSTICE

### Community Oriented Policing

The citizens and businesses of Minneapolis have benefited significantly from Congress' commitment to community oriented policing. During the past 8 years, crime in Minneapolis has significantly decreased. Given the shortfall in State support for Minnesota cities, the national recession, increasing unemployment and demands for homeland defense, the City is concerned that crime will increase and the gains that the City has made in renewing the region's urban core will be lost. **The City respectfully request support for community oriented policing programs and aid to local law enforcement departments in the FY 2003 budget for the Department of Justice.**

### Diversity in the Police Force

Minneapolis' growing diversity demands fair representation in the organizations that enforce laws. The City believes that engaging economically disadvantaged youth in public safety and encouraging them to consider careers in law enforcement is good public policy. **The City requests support in developing federal policies that support representative policing and law enforcement, specifically through strategies that engage youth.**

## TECHNOLOGY

### Digital Divide

Access to technology and technological skills are critical to the education and economic development of all communities. This access, however, disproportionately favors certain classes and races. As technology becomes increasingly important for employment opportunities and vital to accessing information, all citizens must have the opportunity to participate and benefit to prevent a further division between citizens based on their socioeconomic status. **The City encourages Congress to work on creative approaches for engaging citizens in technology and to incorporate access to this technology in public schools, libraries, and health centers in Minnesota.**

## TRANSPORTATION

### Aviation Noise

The Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport is one of the largest airports in the world and is only 10 minutes from downtown Minneapolis. The proximity of the airport to the City brings with it considerable quality of life issues. As a member of the National Organization to Insure a Sound-controlled Environment (NOISE) and through our relationship with local aviation officials, the City is active in pursuing strategies to ensure livability in the urban core. **The City asks continued support in advocating for airport neighborhoods and communities, including support for progressive noise mitigation programs and regulations to mandate quieter aircraft. The City also requests increased flexibility in the revenue diversion procedures.**

### High Speed Rail

The City of Minneapolis strongly supports the creation of a high-speed rail link from Chicago to the Twin Cities as a regional economic development tool and a national solution to overdependence on aviation. The City continues to work with its regional partners in St. Paul and with local officials from across the Midwest to make this proposal a reality. **The City asks for support in developing legislation that provides a funding to implement the Midwest High Speed Rail Initiative.**

### Transit/Light Rail

The Twin Cities metropolitan region is expected to grow by million people in 30 years. The impact on the region's public infrastructure will be significant. To spur economic development, protect our environment and encourage livable communities, transit infrastructure is critical for containing this growth. **The City therefore respectfully requests continued support for the Twin Cities Transitways project, especially the Hiawatha and Northstar corridors.**

## WATER & ENVIRONMENT

### Combined Sewer Overflow

Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) threatens to contaminate the Mississippi River, the City's many lakes, and the natural habitat that call these natural resources home. CSO is not only an environmental issue but also a public health concern because it jeopardizes the City's water supply. To guard the public health and to protect the City's natural resources, the City intends to apply for funding under the newly authorized Sewer Overflow Control grant program. **The City respectfully asks that Congress fully fund this authorized program.**

## WELFARE

### Loss of Benefits

The TANF eligibility time limits for welfare recipients are coming to an end. The public policy made in a time of prosperity impacts significantly working women and children during this current recession. At a time when Minnesota citizens are beginning to lose their eligibility for federal income assistance, a state budget shortfall prevents the State from supporting the individuals that need special assistance as their eligibility closes. The City of Minneapolis, home to the largest number of welfare recipients in the State, urges Congress to reexamine the federal government's role as a provider of services to society's most vulnerable people. **The City therefore asks that Congress monitor the status of those welfare recipients nearing the end of their eligibility and act to restore benefits to them if they are left with no alternative income.**